

it was too late to draw back. Though Benedetti, the French Ambassador, also disapproved the demand, he carried out his instructions with a zeal which annoyed the courteous old monarch and played straight into Bismarck's hands. The refusal of a guarantee, declares Ollivier, would have been swallowed by the Council, where the war party was outvoted, had not a garbled report of the Ems conversations been published by Bismarck, who gleefully described it as a red rag to the Gallic bull. On learning that this deliberate insult to France had been officially communicated to foreign Governments, Ollivier felt that war was legitimate and inevitable.

This time the Council was unanimous for war. The Empress neither spoke nor voted, but her views were well known. In annotating the declaration 'of war to the Chamber he let fall the famous words : We accept the responsibility *le caur kger*. The phrase, he confesses, was unpremeditated, but it merely meant that his conscience was clear. Any other Government, he is Convinced, would have done the same after the publication of the Ems telegram, for the honour of France was at stake.

The fifteenth and sixteenth volumes comment on the hectic weeks which preceded the fall of the Second Empire. The French army, he declares, was ready and superior in quality to the Prussian, the French soldier still the best in the world. The war was lost by the leaders, not by the rank and file. The Emperor was physically unfit for the burdens of Commander in Chief, which should have been born? by MacMahon. When he said good-bye to the Empress and his Ministers at St. Cloud, the atmosphere was funereal. The army should have attacked instead of waiting for the foe. After the first disasters Ollivier begged the distracted Empress, acting as Regent, to invite the

Emperor to return. That was impossible, she
replied, till a
victory had been won. " But, Madam, if he
remains with the
army there will be no victory; he is the obstacle
to victory, for
he cannot command and he prevents the
command by some
one else." Distrusted by the Empress and
deserted by his
supporters in the Chamber, Ollivier resigned.
His fall, he
believes, was a national catastrophe : had he
remained in office
there would have been no Sedan and the
Empire would have
survived. At this point the curtain falls. The
sixteenth volume
was published in 1912 when the author was,
eighty-seven. A
year later he was dead.

Where Ollivier lays down the pen Freycinet,
who started his